



# NEW MEXICO ENERGY, MINERALS and NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

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## **ENMRD Secretary Announces Expansion of Fireworks, Smoking, Campfire and Open-Fire Restrictions**

*Restrictions now include all New Mexico counties*

**(Santa Fe, New Mexico)** – New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Secretary Joanna Prukop and State Forester Arthur "Butch" Blazer today announced new restrictions on fireworks, smoking, campfire and open-fires. The new restrictions will go into effect at **8 a.m. Monday May 15, 2006** on non-municipal, non-federal and non-tribal lands across all of New Mexico.

These new restrictions now cover Catron, Cibola, McKinley, Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, San Juan, and Taos, which had not been included in previous restrictions released earlier this year. This encompasses all state and private lands outside municipal and tribal jurisdictions. The restrictions in all counties listed will remain in effect until rescinded.

ENMRD Secretary Joanna Prukop and State Forester Arthur "Butch" Blazer signed an order for the restrictions due to prolonged low levels of precipitation, high winds and low humidity. Fuel moistures are at levels hazardous for burning and fire danger is high. The restrictions include:

- **Smoking:** Allowed only in enclosed buildings, developed recreation areas, within structures, vehicles equipped with ashtrays on paved or surfaced roads and in areas at least three feet in diameter that are barren or cleared of all flammable material.
- **Fireworks:** Prohibited in all state and private wildlands outside city or tribal jurisdictions. Wildland areas include lands covered wholly or in part by timber, brush, grass, grain or other flammable vegetation. Exceptions are allowed for fire department approved public exhibits.
- **Campfires: Banned** in all open areas including New Mexico State Parks unless the following exceptions are met. And exception is granted to the above where cooking or heating devices use kerosene, white gas or propane as a fuel in an improved camping area that is cleared of all flammable vegetation for at least 30 feet or has a water source. (For information, contact park managers or visit [www.nmparks.com](http://www.nmparks.com)). The State Forester is also allowing exceptions for charcoal grills and wood and coal stoves within yards associated with a residence or on the premises of a business.
- **Open Fires are prohibited** (i.e. an ignition device using natural or artificial fuel that either has an open flame or requires that the heat source be placed physical in the device). An exception is granted where a patrol is posted on site for at least one hour after all equipment operations are completed. The patrol must be able to detect within five minutes, fires that may originate at the site of the equipment operation and be able to report a fire to the responsible protection agency within 15 minutes of detection. In addition, a water source must be available on site.

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**Open burning** (i.e., burning of cropland, fields, rangeland, debris burning, slash piles, prescribed burning or weed burning) is prohibited. The State Forester grants an exception to open burning when the following conditions are met:

1. The cropland is irrigated. This exception does not apply to non-irrigated croplands, fields or rangelands;
2. Burning is done with adequate planning;
3. Adequate personnel monitor and control the burn, to assure that it will not become an uncontrolled fire;
4. The burn area is secured from becoming uncontrolled at the end of daily operations; and;
5. At the beginning of each day, before ignition, the person responsible for the burn notifies the local fire department responsible for fire protection and follows all local burning guidelines and 20.2.60.111 NMAC, Conditions for Restricted Open Burning related to state air quality.

**Flaring of gas is prohibited.** The State Forester grants an exception to the prohibition on open fires for the flaring of natural gas when the following conditions are met:

1. Unless the flaring is needed for safety purposes, flaring pursuant to this exception shall not be done on days that are "red flag days" as determined by the National Weather Service or on days when the sustained wind is in excess of 25 miles per hour in the area;
2. The local fire department and county dispatch are notified at least 24 hours in advance of anticipated releases that will result in flaring. If flaring is done by an automated system then the schedule of flaring shall be provided to the local fire department and the county dispatch, and mowed and maintained at a length not to exceed six inches and all other flammable products or debris shall be cleared in the area for a distance of one and one half times the height of the stack.
3. At least one adult is on site with communications equipment adequate to reach county dispatch and the local fire department in the event of a fire. The individual should also be equipped with a shovel and a water backpack pump or other equipment to deliver water to suppress a fire; and
4. If flaring is to take place at an unmanned facility, then the area around the flare stack mowed and maintained at a length not to exceed six inches and all other flammable products or debris shall be cleared in the area for a distance of three times the height of the stack

### **Exemptions**

The State Forester may allow exemptions from the above upon receiving a written request and granting subsequent approval in writing. You may apply for an exemption on the Forestry Division website at [www.nmforestry.com](http://www.nmforestry.com).

An exemption does not relieve a person from any civil or criminal liability associated with an uncontrolled fire, including costs associated with wildland fire suppression.

For specific information concerning the restrictions, please see the attached smoking, campfire and open fire restrictions bulletin or view the fire restrictions on the web at [www.nmforestry.com](http://www.nmforestry.com). For more information, please call (505) 476-3326.

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